

# Christmas Safety Tips for your Pets!

The holiday season is almost upon us, which means lots of food, shopping, and family celebrations. This time of the year can be very exciting yet at the same time very stressful not only for you, but for your pets as well. That is why the San Bernardino County Animal Care and Control Program would like to offer pet owners the following tips to help keep their pets safe during the holiday season.



- ☐ If you plan on having a Christmas tree in your home there are a few things that you should remember. For instance, tinsel should be avoided because your pet may think that it is a toy to play with and they may accidentally swallow and choke on the tiny strings. In addition, do not decorate your tree with popcorn or other food items and remove all edible gifts from under the tree.
- ☐ You should also try to hang small and breakable ornaments out of your pet's reach. Do not place chemicals in your tree's water. It may keep your tree fresh longer, but it can prove very harmful to your pets. Do not allow your pet to drink the tree's water because it can get dirty very quickly and many pine needles fall into the water dish. A tight-fitting tree skirt over the tree stand may help to prevent this. Always make sure your pet has plenty of fresh water in his/her own dish at all times.
- ☐ Electric window displays and lights are very inviting, not only to you and your neighborhood, but to your curious pets as well. Make sure that all of your electrical connections and outlets are secured and concealed.
- ☐ Tape electrical cords to the walls or floors to ensure that your pet will not chew on them.
- ☐ Never hang edible treats, such as stockings filled with chocolates and other candies in dangerous places, such as near a fireplace or on a Christmas tree.
- ☐ Holiday plants, such as poinsettias, amaryllis, mistletoe, and holly may add beauty to your home, but they are very poisonous to your pets. If these plants are ingested, they may cause vomiting, diarrhea, or even more serious problems. If you purchase these items for your home, please make sure that they are out of your pet's reach.
- ☐ Before your family celebrations, make sure that your pets have a safe, quiet area where they can rest. It is best to keep your pet locked up safely in a bedroom where they can escape from all the noise and festivities. If your pet enjoys having company come over, just make sure they do not become too overwhelmed. They need quiet time to rest and relax just like you do.
- ☐ After you have had your fill of holiday turkey, ham, chicken, and/or roast beef make sure you throw those bones away – do not give them to your pet! You might think that you are giving them a treat, but actually you may be threatening their health. Bones can splinter easily and cause damage to your pet's throat and intestines. Bones can also become lodged in your pet's throat, which may result in your pet not being able to breathe.
- ☐ You should also avoid feeding your pet chocolate, candy, and cookies, which can be toxic to their health. Feeding your pet these products can result in extreme vomiting and can make your pet very sick. If you want to give your pet a special treat then try changing the way you feed them their regular pet food. Adding water or broth to dry food or mixing in canned food makes a great treat and it is much healthier for your pet. Do not feed your pet high-fat foods, such as gravy and dressing, which can cause serious stomach upsets. You should make sure that your guests know not to feed your pet as well.
- ☐ After your gifts are opened, quickly dispose of all plastic wrappings, ribbons, and bows that can be easily swallowed by curious pets.
- ☐ Perhaps most importantly, PLEASE make sure that all of your pets have proper ID tags on at all times because if your pet were to become lost, you would have a much greater chance of finding them if they have identification.

**The San Bernardino County Animal Care & Control Program hopes that these pet tips prove helpful and they want to wish all of you and your pets a happy and safe holiday season. And, remember if you are interested in adopting a pet over the holidays, please visit one of your local animal shelters where there are thousands of homeless animals just waiting to find a responsible and loving family to celebrate with.**

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